

**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
STRATEGIC PLAN BACKGROUND HISTORY 1995 – 2007  
REVIEW AND UPDATE OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS-STRATEGIES-INITIATIVES**

**Why Update the Department Strategic Plan**

One of the recommendations of the recent 2005 Bureau of State Audits review of the Department Fish and Game Preservation Fund was that we update the Department Strategic Plan. Strategic Plans are generally reviewed and updated every three to five years. It is a dynamic document that needs to be updated or changed periodically in response to a changing environment. This is generally done by gathering internal and/or external feedback to modify the plan to ensure that it remains current, topical, and is not in conflict with current administration environmental policies. It is actually best to revisit and update the Department's Strategic Plan based on known events by instituting a process of continuous review, update, and refinement. In summary, the 1995 Strategic Plan is based on four long term Strategic Themes with Goals and Strategies that look forward in terms of decades with the understanding that it needs to be periodically reviewed to see if it still meets the Department mission, values, wildlife resource needs, business needs, and changing environment. The following review schedule reflects suggested maximum time variations between major elements: Vision: 10 years, Mission: 10 years, Values: 10 years, Goals and Strategies: 5 years. Periodic reviews of the Strategic Plan and the update of strategic goals and strategies is conducted with the input of Deputy Directors, Regional Managers, and Administration Division Branch Chiefs.

**1993 – 1995 Brief History of Department Strategic Planning**

The following provides a brief summary of the Departments strategic planning effort and a process for reviewing and updating strategic goals and strategies. **In 1993**, the Department issued the document entitled "A Vision for the Future." The document contains the Department's vision, mission and values and is the foundation for the Department's Strategic Plan. It was developed with the involvement of internal and external stakeholders

**In 1994** and following the issuance of the Vision Document, the Department moved forward and became involved in strategic planning which is managing for results. It is defined as a long term, future oriented process of assessment, goal setting, and strategy building that maps a clear path between the present and a vision for the future. It relies on careful consideration of an organization's capabilities and environment, and leads to priority based resource allocation and other decisions.

The overall purpose of planning is to improve the chances of reaching possible desirable outcomes. The benefits of planning enable an organization to:

- Prepare for contingencies that could prevent it from attaining its goals,
- Prepare a framework for the organization's orderly growth and progress, and
- Prepare a strategy for the allocation of resources in a matter that will allow the organization to meet its goals.

The Department's Strategic Plan was issued in **May 1995** and was officially approved by the Governor's Office in **October 1997**. It was developed in collaboration with stakeholder organizations, employees, and other interested individuals, and is a major tool for the Department to effectively accomplish its mission, and goals. It provides a programmatic framework to guide the Department for up to ten years or longer into the future, and attempts to anticipate the future of California's wildlife resources, and describes the actions to improve organizational effectiveness. By doing this, it responds to concerns raised by those public constituents most affected by Department program operations. As a companion to the plan, DFG also developed an Information Technology Strategic Plan, Marine Strategic Plan, and Fish and Game Commission Strategic Plan.

**The Department Strategic Plan has four major themes which contain 27 action goals and 125 implementation strategies. The themes are:**

- **Theme I:** Public Service, Outreach, and Education which contains 10 goals, and 43 strategies
- **Theme II:** Cooperative Approaches to Resource Stewardship and Use which contains 4 goals, and 18 strategies
- **Theme III:** Manage Wildlife from a Broad Habitat Perspective which contains 5 goals, and 23 strategies, and
- **Theme IV:** Organizational Vitality which contains 8 goals, and 41 strategies

**Major elements of the Department Strategic Plan are:**

- **Vision:** Describes the ideal future state as it relates to the mission
- **Mission:** Describes the unique purpose and reason for being
- **Values:** Describes the fundamental philosophy on how to operate
- **Theme:** Describes the strategic issue of importance
- **Goal:** Describes "what" needs to happen (general direction) to address a strategic issue
- **Strategy:** Describes "how" Goals will be achieved

- **Action Plan:** Describes actions for executing each strategy

### **1997 Review of Past Effort to Implement the Strategic Plan**

To implement the Strategic Plan in April 1995, Department management completed an in-depth review of the Strategic Plan goals and strategies, established selection criteria, and selected a set of items or strategies as the Strategic Focus Items for FY 95/96 and FY 96/97. Fifteen specific items were identified for action planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Each Focus Item was given a sponsor who selected a Team Leader and Project Team to develop an Action Plan for implementation. Because this was a learning phase for Department staff, tactical Action Plans were developed and implemented with varying degrees of success.

### **The following is a list of the 1995 Strategic Focus Items:**

- **Under Theme 1, Goal 5: Developing an integrated program that identifies needs and opportunities in education and communication.**
- **Under Theme I, Goal 7: Establishing law enforcement priorities.**
- **Under Theme I, Goal 10: Developing contingency plans for public safety issues.**
- **Under Theme II, Goal 3: Implementing clarifying definitions and applications of policies for the FGC 1600 process as they relate to stakeholder groups.**
- **Under Theme II, Goal 4: Coordinating implementation and use of GIS and setting standards for data gathering and sharing.**
- **Under Theme II, Goal 3: Implementing a Land Contracts policy and process as an incentive for private landowners to maintain habitat on their lands.**
- **Under Theme II, Goal 3: Implementing a program with the Wildlife Conservation Board to acquire land in anticipation of future mitigation needs – a mitigation land bank.**
- **Under Theme II, Goal 1: Establishing a fishery improvement and protection projects in coordination with marine commercial and sport fishing interests: White Seabass Pilot Program**
- **Under Theme III, Goal 3: Conducting central valley in-stream flow studies in cooperation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.**
- **Under Theme III, Goal 4: Establishing priorities for resource assessment and research.**

- **Under Theme III, Goal 2: Directing activities toward maintaining, enhancing, and restoring wildlife communities on lands managed by DFG for wildlife benefit.**
- **Under Theme IV, Goal 3: Improving the budgeting and fiscal management systems.**
- **Under Theme IV, Goal 2: Improving internal communication and coordination on water, timber harvest, and endangered species policies and issues.**
- **Under Theme IV, Goal 2: Establishing a clear process for developing policies and DFG positions in the areas of water, timber harvest, and endangered species.**
- **Under Theme IV, Goal 3 & 7: Update the Department's Information technology Plan**

### **1997 Institutional and Fiscal Reform of the Department**

In 1997 and as stated in the Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan, the Department restructured its programs and organizations which dated back to the 1950's in order to modernize and address management information and other program shortcomings. The reorganization restructured 9 programs, 9 divisions, and 5 regions into 6 programs, 4 divisions, and 7 regions. Implementing these changes was done to help adapt the Department to large scale changes in population growth, demographic trends, expanded and diversified responsibilities, changes in funding, advances in information technology, and a growing staff. The Strategic Plan and Reorganization helped the Department to foster improved resource management and planning practices for fish, wildlife, habitat, and other conservation functions.

Also in 1997, the Director combined all 4 SP Themes into 3 major Goals for DFG based on legislative mandates: 1. Protection of the State's Natural Resources, 2. Improved Service to the Public, and 3. Organizational Vitality. Prior year initiatives launched under these Goals were in the area of Land Stewardship, Upland Game Bird, Ocean and Coastal, Fishing and Hunting, Marine Fisheries, CALFED Bay Delta, Watershed, 1600 Regulations, Exotic Species, and Steelhead Trout. It also established new administrative practices and information technologies needed to provide improved services to Department employees, and constituents. Some examples are the Office of Training and Development, Project Diane, Geographic Information Systems, Commercial Fisheries Information Systems, Expenditure Data Warehouse, Budget Management System, Time reporting, Automated Big Game Draw, and the Automated License Data System.

Institutional reform of the Department was done to adapt the department in the 1990's to changes that had occurred since it was established in 1952. This included population

growth and demographic trends, expanded and diversified responsibilities, changed funding patterns, advances in information technology, and important program reforms in fish and wildlife resource management including comprehensive multi species (large scale) conservation planning.

In summary, since issuing the Department Strategic Plan in 1995, the Department has continued to utilize it as a basis for management planning and decision making. Many goals and strategies have been incorporated into program activities and/or project initiatives. All high level planning from reorganization, administrative processes, fiscal changes, and information technology applications involves consideration of the Department Strategic Plan. Not everything has been successful nor has everything turned out as planned. Never the less, the Strategic Plan has changed the Department and the way we conduct business.

### **2000 Review and 2004 CPS Survey (Review) of the Strategic Plan**

In 2000, the Department reviewed all four Themes, Goals, and Strategies to ensure they did not conflict with Governor Davis environmental policies and still meet the mission requirements. There were no significant findings and/or needed changes. In 2004, the Department conducted another review of the Strategic Plan for the California Performance Review Survey initiated by Governor Schwarzenegger to answers specific questions about the Strategic Plan development, and performance measures.

### **2005 Where Are We Now (DFG Focus on Fundamental Priorities)**

Over the last couple of years, the Department has experienced a series of budget reductions and has lost many experienced staff due to retirement. It has forced us to work harder and smarter with our dedicated staff. Much has changed since 1995 with regards to lower staff levels, declining revenues, increased workloads, and demands for services. In response, the Director has asked executive staff to review current program and organizational structures to develop alternatives to help us operate more effectively, and to restructure divisions in a way to maximize communication, coordination, and effectiveness. The Director has also directed the HQ Branches to focus their effort on the following fundamental priorities: wildlife and fisheries management, water resource management, habitat conservation planning and regulations, and resource assessment. These changes are the first of what will be a continuing effort to improve the Department's operations and to deliver mission-critical programs at the highest level possible.

The future will be a time of large scale changes and challenges for the Department. In 2005 and beyond, the population, environment, political, financial, and demographic face of California will be rapidly changing. Development and growth of the States economy will certainly impact our trustee responsibility for all fish, wildlife, and plant resources requiring the need for strategic statewide planning to support and meet our mission. Strategic planning will be the essential tool to meet future challenges in a

complex environment. To facilitate this effort, the Department will update its plan to help manage existing and future problems with limited resources.

### **Five Year 2005 Review Update Instructions for the Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies**

The purpose of this update was to focus on new Goals and Strategies. Within our plan, the Goals and Strategies provide a strategic context for decision making. They represent existing challenges or opportunities of vital impact. Goals are also the general direction the department will take to address strategic issues or where we want to go. They provide a focus but not specific actions. The Strategies represent how we will get there or a course of action and Action Plans are used for executing each of the strategies. Staff were requested to review the vision, mission, values, goals, strategies, and think about our changing environment, threats and opportunities, and future challenges.

For each Theme, staff was requested to list the strategies that they would like to have added or expanded in an updated Strategic Plan. This was accomplished by reviewing the Theme, and looking at each Goal which tells us “What” needs to be done, and by looking at the “Strategies” under each goal which tell us “How” to do it. Staff was asked to think about the following question: What are the other practical Goals and/or Strategies we might pursue to achieve this Theme or Goal? What are the barriers to realizing this alternative? What major initiatives might we pursue to achieve the alternative through overcoming the barrier? Then write a Goal or Strategy Statement. Make sure the purpose of the new Goal or Strategy is understandable. A new Goal must address the Theme Issue and be achievable. Likewise, a new Strategy must address the Goal and be achievable. New proposed Goals and/or Strategies were reviewed by executive management for relevancy to the Department’s Mission, Vision, Theme Issues, and future operational challenges. Those which best meet this criteria were considered for adoption. **Note: Upon completion of the 2005 Review, executive management recommended one new proposed Goal and twenty-four proposed Strategies be incorporated within the Strategic Plan as an addendum to keep the plan current with the mission and changing environment.**

### **2007 Strategic Plan Initiatives**

In 2007, the Director realized a distinct need to plan not only for certain resource management needs brought about by the mounting stressors on fish and wildlife from a growing population, but also for perpetual organizational vitality through an ongoing investment in our employees and their continuing success. Staying mindful of the Department’s **Values and Principles**, the Executive Team considered future actions, and then worked to distinguish both short-term actions and long-term strategies to meet these objectives. These initiatives are as follows:

#### **1. Enhance communications, education and outreach**

- 2. Develop statewide land stewardship based upon resource needs**
- 3. Develop strong water resource management program**
- 4. Develop/enhance partnerships**
- 5. Improve regulatory programs**
- 6. Enhance organizational vitality by focusing on employees and internal systems**
- 7. Expand scientific capacity**

The Department is developing Action Plans (strategies and tasks) to implement the Strategic Initiatives. Each initiative is sponsored by a member of the Executive Team who is now tasked with compiling recommendations, providing an opportunity for all staff to give input, and preparing an implementation plan for the Director's consideration. As strategies are assigned to staff and/or work teams to flesh out for development and implementation, updates will be posted on the DFG Intranet.